THE

WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

For MONDAY, April 27, 1807.

On the PRESENT STATE *of the* BRITISH NAVY.

A Tract, intitled "Naval Anecdotes, or a New Key to the Proceedings of a late Naval Administration," containing some interesting information on the state of the navy, and the mode in which that important department of the national affairs, has been lately administered, is just published, from which we select the following passages:

The author, after adverting to the peculiar importance of the British navy, in the present eventful circumstances of Europe, thus remarks:

"But Britain has braved the storm, and her navy stands triumphant in the wreck of nations. It has defeated alike the struggles of the republic, and the more skilful efforts of the present government of France. Our successes have not been due to local or temporary causes, nor to fortunate combinations of accidental occurrences, but (under providence) to the inherent energy of our officers and our seamen—to the superiority of the British, in close combat, over every other nation. The radical cause of this superiority lies in the freedom and intrepidity inspired by our excellent constitution; and in former wars, when the skill of our countrymen and their enemies were nearly balanced, the stubborn fortitude of our ancestors has decided many an obstinate contest in their favour. But, at present, our seamen have added to national courage the dexterity acquired by long exercise, and the confidence inspired by habitual success. That system of manœuvres, by which the French were wont, in former wars, to elude our prowess, is now set at nought, by the auspicious discovery of the method of forcing an enemy's fleet to close action by breaking their line. A naval battle, instead of a long and indecisive contest, is now

rendered the struggle of a few hours, and is terminated not by partial losses to our enemies, but by their almost total annihilation.

"This ascendancy is happily not confined to our own coasts, or to the seas of Europe, but is exemplified on every shore and in every climate. It is a still prouder satisfaction that the continuance of this superiority appears secured by causes of the most durable operation. Our situation is peculiarly adapted for a most extensive commerce, and the skill and courage requisite for the navigation of our shores, assure us a permanent supply of seamen, far superior in their intrepidity and activity to the natives of milder climates. Our officers are educated in a practical school, and the magnitude of our navy affords such opportunities of selection, that if we suffer from the inefficiency of a commander, it must be the fault of government, and must form a solitary exception to a multiplicity of brilliant examples.

"While the military department of our navy is generally understood, and its fame raised beyond the power of calumny, the nature of its civil establishment is less known, and may be easily misrepresented. But the extensive and complicated duties of the civil establishment, and particularly of the navy board, will be evident, when we consider the number of its subordinate departments, and the many millions which are yearly expended under its direction. A vigilant discharge of these duties is of the last importance to the success of our arms. Without incessant exertion in the provision of stores, and in the equipment of our ships of war, it is obvious that the wisdom of our government, and the zeal of our navy would be vain."

THE RING,

A Moral Tale.

By the Authoress of the Occasional Essays.

(Continued from Page 309.)

HAVING opened the campaign, we shall leave the combatants to their different evolutions, marchings, and countermarchings, defeats, and victories; which, like the victories magnified through a false glass, in a lying French bulletin, may turn out at best but a drawn battle; but not having the gift of prescience, we can only proceed in the plain jog trot way, and relate matters as they occur.

At

At their return, the earl needed no great pressing to partake of the family dinner; after which he retired to the inn to dress, and returned, claiming his lovely partner, to attend her to the assembly. At their entrance, the room was more crowded than the night before, and much better company, nothing of the *Dowlas* kind being present, but a very genteel assemblage of beauty and fashion, together with some distinguished personages of his lordship's acquaintance, to whom Mr. and Miss Truman were introduced.

Lord Grandfield and Maria opened the ball, and the minuet was crowned with general approbation. They also joined in some double minuets, cotillions, reels, and two country dances, and Maria seemed to have regained her usual sprightliness, when hinting to her father that she should like to trip an almande, his lordship respectfully bowed, as in acceptation of the challenge. The music struck up the lively strain, the company made room, his fair partner shortened her train, by a tuck up of elegant negligence; and in point of ease, neatness, grace, and agility, the dance was executed in a style, that could hardly have been excelled at the Italian opera. The whole room resounded with applause, and the words—"What a charming couple!"—with various other terms of approbation and admiration, so distinctly heard, that the lovely maid felt quite confused, and requested, as soon as possible, to retire from the public gaze, determined, in future, never to exert her scientific skill in such a dance, but in private company. Her father was happy to return home, fearing she might suffer through fatigue; his lordship too had *his* reasons; for observing a young nobleman attentively eyeing her the whole evening, and in a manner something within his own bosom did not so extremely well relish, was glad to have so fascinating an object removed from his view; so the carriage drawing up, conveyed them, as the night before, to the lodgings of Truman. Soon after the lady retired, the earl took leave, having to set off very early in the morning on business that could not be postponed. The two gentlemen parting with the warmest sensations, and professions of esteem, respect, and regard for each other; his lordship promising to take the earliest opportunity to pass a day with him and the young lady, at Rose Hill, the name of Truman's estate.

The next morning he proposed to Maria taking a ride to enjoy the beautiful prospect of the delightful scene around them; to set off on their return after dinner, and stop at the next town, where there was an excellent inn, that would accommodate them for the night, and they might visit the manufactory next day, and still be at home in good time. This was readily assented to, or any other proposal he might have made, save and except the proposal of banishing Lord Grandfield from her thoughts,

but he had taken too strong a possession for an easy ejectment; the heart had received the guest, unknowing to herself; virtue and innocence cherished and lulled it to repose, and engrossed every tender sensation of the soul. The father's bosom glowed with all the fervour of sincere esteem, friendship, and respect, for his new found noble friend, and he could *talk* of nothing else. The daughter's bosom burned with love, spreading its pure flame through every fine fibre of the heart, that she could *think* of nothing else. The good gentleman was too full of his subject, and the overflowings of unbounded esteem and admiration made so rapid a progress through the current of his speech, that he did not perceive it occasioned an unusual rippling in that of his daughter; that she stammered and hesitated; and that the coincident, though reserved look of a modest, downcast eye, and perpetual blushings, were the only responses she was capable of making; but as the subject was equally pleasing, though creating different sensations, they returned from the airing in perfect harmony with each other.

All being ready, after dinner they sat off, and in little more than a couple of hours, reached the Golden Lion, at ———, where Mr. Tunbelly, the landlord, (who, had it not been for a large bushy white wig, fresh powdered, might have been taken himself for the *Saracen's Head)* received them with his usual politeness, and with many smirking grins, and cringing congees, conducted them to a handsome apartment. Mr. Tunbelly, with the assistance of *two* waiters, sprucely drest, contrived to bring up every thing appertaining to the tea table; a mark of respect he never omitted when a *gentleman's* carriage drove to his door, observing, that as such people could afford to pay double, they certainly *ought*, or there would be no distinguishment between a carriage, with handsome liveries, or a common hack. That great folks liked, and were entitled to respect; and put them in mind, at their departure, that two waiters had a farther claim on their generosity than one; that such were *industrious* people, received no wages, and solely depended on the bounty of his customers for vails; which it was his duty, as a kind master, to enlarge as much as he could. Which he certainly never failed to do—going *snacks* in the profits himself.

At supper Mr. Tunbelly attended as before; Truman expressed himself much pleased with the entertainment, praised the delicacy and goodness of the seasonable viands, and the excellency of the cook; to all of which the landlord answered with a second display of grins, smirks, and congees.

"An' please your honour, I have kept the Lion now going on thirty years, and how I have kept my head above water, Heaven knows! but God gives a blessing to an honest man. I use a *conscience* your honour, and never imposed, as some landlords will, on a gentleman in my life; but really, your honour, what

what with the dearness of provisions, heavy taxes, duties, servants, and the lord knows what, one can hardly make both ends meet; and then, your honour, soldiers ——"

"But these brave fellows, Mr. Tunbelly, are the defenders of the country, and your's among the rest; and it is every man's duty and interest to contribute to their support."

"To be sure, your honour, and I *defies* any man to say Tom Tunbelly is not true to his country, his king, and his religion. Church and king for ever! and I often *says* to my wife, what is a man without religion! and I assure your honour she is a very clever, sensible woman, and knows a thing or two. Yes, your honour, though but a simple landlord, I would turn a rank *papish* out of my house at midnight, though it rained cats and dogs, as we say, if he had not money to pay his way; and if he had, he should pay double, (if he was a stranger, and could not hurt me, for landlords must mind their P's and Q's,) only to shew the difference between one of these outlandish heathens and a *Christian*."

"Having so *enlightened* a sense of religion, you, of course, landlord, strictly keep your church?"

"To be sure, your honour, I always *goes* when we have no company; besides I am, as a body may say, not out of my business, for business must be minded; as no carriage can come to my house, but must pass the church, and was I ever so fast asleep I should wake at the rattling of a wheel, or the crack of a whip; I am at home in a jiffey, and stand ready at my door, before a chaise can draw up. And then again, I have the parish dinners, with all the snacks, whips, and strays of the churchwardens, and the parson, who is a vast comical, pious man, and loves a joke, uses my house, and subscribes to the card assembly; so, your honour, you see I must go to church, or I shall affront my customers."

"Well, landlord, you may remove. I shall ring when necessary, and you will have breakfast ready in the morning at ten."

The landlord bowed and retired; when Truman observed to his daughter—"There goes a wretch truly pitiable; for avarice has laid his fangs with so firm a grasp on the heart, and so strongly fettered every faculty of his contracted mind, that the soul never can be free!"

(To be continued.)

SKAITING *in* FINSBURY FIELDS.

FITZSTEPHEN, who wrote his Description of London before 1182, is very accurate in describing the winter amusements

ments of the Londoners in Finsbury fields; and particularly mentions a species of skaiting. The following is a translation of the passage:

"When that vast lake, which waters the walls of the city toward the north, is hard frozen, the youth in great numbers go to divert themselves on the ice. Some taking a small run for an increment of velocity, place their feet at the proper distance, and are carried sliding sideways a great way; others will make a large cake of ice, and seating one of their companions upon it, they take hold of one another's hands, and draw him along; when it sometimes happens, that moving swiftly on so slippery a plain, they all fall down headlong. Others there are who are still more expert in these amusements on the ice; they place certain bones, the log-bones of some animal, under the soles of their feet, by tying them round their ankles, and then taking a pole shod with iron into their hands, they push themselves forward by striking it against the ice, and are carried along with a velocity equal to the flight of a bird, or a bolt discharged from a cross-bow. Sometimes, two of them thus furnished, agree to start opposite one to another, at a great distance; they meet, elevate their poles, attack and strike each other, when one or both of them fall, and not without some bodily hurt; and even after their fall, they shall be carried a good distance from each other by the rapidity of the motion; and whatever part of your head comes upon the ice, it is sure to be laid bare to the skull. Very often the leg or the arm of the party that falls, if he chances to light upon them, is broken: but youth is an age ambitious of glory, fond and covetous of victory; and that in future times it may acquit itself boldly and valiantly in real engagements, it will run these hazards in sham ones."

Finsbury, or Moorfields, were at this period but a vast morass.

ACCOUNT *of* SIR HOME POPHAM's TRIAL.

(Concluded from Page 313.)

"I Am aware, Sir, that my justification has already extended to a great length, yet, as I conceive it to be incumbent on me to omit no circumstance that can at all tend to illustrate the views which influenced my conduct during the expedition to the Rio de la Plata, I must solicit the indulgence of the court, while I state, as briefly as possible, a few facts, which may serve to shew, that in the whole course of my proceedings, as commanding officer of the squadron in that river, I was never actuated by any selfish consideration, but that, from

the time of the surrender of Buenos Ayres to his majesty's arms until the period of its being wrested from our possession, I made every sacrifice which might convince the world in general that the good of my country was my sole object in having undertaken this expedition without positive orders.

" Permit me, Sir, to call to the attention of the court, that immediately on the surrender of Buenos Ayres, all the property afloat, contained in upwards of one hundred and eighty vessels, to the amount of upwards of a million and a half of dollars, was given up to the proprietors by proclamation. I acted with the same disinterested regard to public service, in relation to large quantities of quicksilver and bark, to the amount of upwards of three millions of dollars, in small and very convenient packages, which were in the castle near the quay, and might have been embarked in the course of three or four days, but I would not suffer any of the valuable merchandize whatever, which might be considered as appertaining to the captors, to be shipped before the squadron should be completely victualled, in order that I might be enabled more effectually to blockade the river in case of a reverse of fortune; and the whole of which property was ultimately recovered by the enemy; moreover, I proposed to the captains and officers of the squadron, and it was generally agreed, that we should present to government whatever armed vessels might be captured, and be deemed fit for his majesty's service. Among these was the Neptune, a fine ship of twenty guns, which had been formerly a Liverpool privateer, and had been taken by the Spaniards, together with several large armed schooners and gun vessels. In short, on all occasions, I inculcated and enforced, both by precept and example, the doctrine of sacrificing private advantage to the public good, and of regulating our proceedings by what might appear most for the honour and glory of the British nation. I am most happy in this opportunity of rescuing my character in this public manner, and by evidence before the court, from the imputations which have been cast upon it in this respect.

" Before I finally close, I must again shortly revert to the point most important, because it does not apply to my case only, but to that of every officer in the navy. If an officer commanding in foreign parts is never to avail himself of information which he may receive, never to use his own discretion, or to undertake an expedition against an enemy's possessions, without precise and immediate orders from home, which cannot arrive until the moment for action shall have elapsed—if he is to be so strictly and permanently bound by the letter of his instructions under which he sailed from England, that even after the full and happy accomplishment of the object to which these instructions were directed he shall not be at liberty to

undertake

undertake and accomplish any other, however within his reach, however important in isself or in its consequences, however pointed out to them by new information and by increased facilities, and however nearly connected in many important points of view with that which he was originally sent to accomplish—if this is to be the rule and limit of an officer's exertion, in a situation of such trust and confidence, the result will, I confidently foretell, be ruin to the British navy. It will lead to the entire cessation of all acts of enterprize, and to the total extinction of that daring spirit which has so long bid defiance to all opposition, because an officer will be deterred by the reflection, that for venturing to attack or annoy the enemies of his country, without positive instructions, his conduct may be prejudged by a superior authority at home, and (as in the order for holding the present trial) it may be stigmatized *as a flagrant breach of public duty, that should not pass unpunished.*

" I must now, Sir, before I end my defence, and put myself upon the judgement of the court, draw your attention, in a few words, to what I humbly conceive are the points for your consideration.

" On your decision now depends the future conduct and enterprize of the navy of Great Britain. The interest I have in the result, deep as it is, is trifling compared with that which must be felt by every officer in the navy; I may say, by the nation at large.

" As on the one hand you are called upon to consider and decide upon my case, so as not to sanction or authorise, by your judgement, a lax interpretation, or careless execution, or neglect of orders—so, on the other hand, you are called upon by a due regard to the interests of the navy of Great Britain, and as involved in their interests, the safety and independence of a nation, which looks up to that navy for protection, not to check that energy and spirit of enterprize, which, if checked by an unfavourable sentence on me, and passed by such a court, and so composed, may not easily be revived. I consider myself as an humble individual, standing before you on a charge deeply affecting my character, but more deeply affecting the future interests of the navy.

" My case must be decided on general principles, totally unconnected with any feelings which relate to me personally; and it is for you, Sir, and the hon. members of this court to determine, whether an officer, circumstanced as I was, employed as I have been on previous occasions, led on by a singular and connected chain of circumstances to consider this enterprize as a favourite object, not of my own ambition, but of the wishes of a distinguished minister, on whose approbation would have followed not merely protection, but probably com-

mendation, money, and rewards; having been originally and so lately appointed to carry into execution, diverted from it only by my own suggestion of an intermediate expedition, having a full and confidential knowledge of all the circumstances which for a time delayed the execution, and hearing in a distant part of the world, without means of immediate communication, that all these obstacles had been done away; having also means at my disposal, adequate, as I thought, to the end, and believing in the then state of Europe, and particularly of my country, the immediate execution of this plan was most important—it is for you, Gentlemen, to say, under all these circumstances, whether I was justified according to my orders, or whether I am not to stand excused for having hazarded this exercise of discretion.

"In your hands I put with confidence my case, satisfied that the importance of it, and the attention I have received, will ensure to me the benefit of all the circumstances I have stated and of the arguments I have used. On these grounds I humbly hope and trust that I shall receive from the justice of the court an honourable acquittal."

EVIDENCE.

Lord Melville was the first witness called.

Sir Home Popham. Will your lordship have the goodness to relate all the circumstances in your recollection respecting the conversation which I held with Mr. Pitt and your lordship, as relating to myself, on the subject of the expedition to South America?

A. Soon after I came to the head of the board of admiralty I had occasion to learn, that the administration preceding that of which I had formed a part, had communication with General Miranda relative to some projects he entertained on South America. I thought it my duty to see Sir Evan Nepean and Sir Home Popham, and others, who, I had reason to think, were acquainted with particulars which had passed under former administrations, to inform myself more immediately relative to the views and projects of General Miranda. I likewise had more than one confidential conversation with General Miranda himself. The result was, an opinion that, although it might not be wise or expedient, or, perhaps, within the means of this country at that time, to commit themselves fully to the extent of this project, it was of the utmost importance to the interests of this country to watch the progress of his operations, and to make use of them, if they could be made subservient to the purpose of opening the South American market to the trade and manufactures of this country; and upon that principle I had, as on every other public subject, almost daily

communication, both in town and at Wimbledon, with Mr. Pitt. The subject was more familiar to my consideration, because for many years past, particularly in 1796, I had occasion to consider it maturely, with a view of preparing, in concert with the then board of admiralty, operations against South America on a very extensive scale. Sir Home Popham came to town, and I had many communications with him, in consequence of the various communications I had with Mr. Pitt, and these communications continued during the remaining period I remained at the admiralty. I ceased to be in that situation immediately after the 1st of April, 1805; and from my own knowledge I can speak to nothing after the 8th of April.

Q. Upon the capture of Buenos Ayres did your lordship consider it an acquisition materially advancing the great object which Mr. Pitt and your lordship had in view with respect to South America?

A. No doubt, Buenos Ayres appeared to me as highly beneficial for the object I have already had in view.

Q. Was Sir H. Popham appointed to the Diadem with a view of carrying on offensive operations against Spanish South America?

A. I believe Sir H. Popham was appointed to that ship with the view of co-operating with General Miranda, to the extent of taking advantage of any of his proceedings which might tend to our attaining a position on the continent of South America favourable to the trade of this country, but I do not recollect any specific place being fixed upon.

Q. Was Sir H. Popham appointed by your lordship to any command sufficient to authorise him to attack any part of South America?

A. Certainly not, in the proper sense of the word.

Q. Your lordship said, speaking of Buenos Ayres, that was one of the specific objects in view when the armament was in contemplation in 1796; had your lordship that place in your view at any time since the breaking out of the Spanish war up to the year your lordship retired from the admiralty?

A. At all times and in every conversation I had with Mr. Pitt on the subject, I make no doubt Buenos Ayres was often the subject of discussion.

Q. Does your lordship recollect directing me to attend at Wimbledon, some time in the month of October, 1804, when there was nobody present but your lordship and Mr. Pitt, to explain all General Miranda's views, and discuss the objects to which he was anxious to call the attention of ministers?

A. I recollect perfectly the conversation having taken place, but I cannot charge my memory with the particular month. I recollect perfectly having received such a memoir, and I certainly employed you to draw it up.

Q. Does

Q. Does your lordship recollect, that when you did me the honour to appoint me to the Diadem, it was my sole view to bring into execution either some part or the whole of the plan submitted to your consideration in the above received memorandum?

A. I do recollect, that when Sir H. Popham was appointed to the Diadem, the object then immediately intended was, to co-operate with the general in such object mentioned in the memoir as might be thought conducive to the interests of Great Britain.

Mr. Sturges Bourne sworn and examined.—The substance of his evidence was, that Sir H. Popham communicated to him some important information relative to the Cape of Good Hope, in the month of July, 1805, for the purpose of communicating it to Mr. Pitt; that Mr. Pitt immediately authorised him to make further inquiry on the subject; and Mr. Pitt determined to take the necessary measures for the execution of an expedition against the Cape.

William Huskisson, Esq. sworn and examined.—Q. Do you recollect my telling you that Mr. Pitt had desired I would give you the names of some gentlemen who were likely to furnish him with every further information on the subject of South America?

A. I recollect, generally, frequent conversations passed between Mr. Pitt and myself, in which he expressed an anxiety to gain every possible information respecting South America?

Q. Will you have the goodness to state the nature of those conversations generally?

A. I believe that on almost every occasion Mr. Pitt concurred with me on the subject of South America. I recollect, among other circumstances (the court will excuse my not giving names, as I could not do it without a breach of trust to individuals), that a person brought to me an engraved chart of the Rio de la Plata, which I hold in my hand, which had been then recently, as he informed me, published at Paris, being the original, taken from the depot of the king of Spain, at Madrid; and he added, that he had intelligence which led him to believe that plan might shortly be given to some part of the French navy, who would probably find their way to that settlement. Knowing, as I did, that the person who gave me that information was one in whom Mr. Pitt was disposed to place reliance, I of course thought it my duty to communicate to him immediately the plan, and what he had stated to me. On this occasion some conversation, as may be naturally supposed, passed between us. Mr. Pitt stated to me, as he had stated before, the views he entertained with respect to South America generally, that it was a most essential object to this country to use its naval superiority, and the facility that superiority afforded

forded to our operations against South America, should we be obliged to continue the war, as he apprehended we should, if the success of the confederacy then forming on the continent did not correspond to his wishes on that subject. But he thought this place of essential service on the subject of Mr. Pitt's views towards South America. I can only state that Mr. Pitt in conversation explained to me a particular objection which had a certain weight with England at that time for not undertaking immediate operations against South America; but I cannot take upon me to say, whether, in case that objection had not existed, Sir H. Popham would then have received instructions to proceed to that part of the world, but my opinion is that he would.

Q. Was that particular objection removed by the complete failure of the views which Mr. Pitt had in forming the confederacy on the continent?

A. I conceive it was.

Mr. Marsden was then called in and sworn, but his evidence bore not very strongly on any part of the charge.

Mr. T. Wilson, a merchant of London, sworn and examined.—Q. Do you recollect my having several conversations about the Rio de la Plata with you in the summer of 1805?

A. Yes, I do; I think about the month of June. It was respecting the products of the country and its strength, which you learned from a person who had been employed there by me. The result was, that all the information I had was from three certain persons; I made an appointment with one of them to go up to Mr. Pitt, with Sir H. Popham, on his return from Portsmouth.

Q. Did you endeavour to persuade one of them of the necessity of pressing upon Mr. Pitt's mind the value of a strong hold in South America?

A. I have been in the habit of trading to that part of the country by licence since 1802 by neutral vessels. I have suggested the great consequence of that trade to this country, and how easily it could be effected in British vessels, the place itself being so weak.

Q. Did you ever mention this to the Board of Trade publicly.

A. Yes, I did, several times publicly.

Mr. Thomas Browne sworn and examined by Sir H. Popham.—Q. Were you master attendant at the Cape of Good Hope after its capture in 1804?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you consider the Cape in a perfect state of security after I sailed from it with my squadron for the river De la Plata?

A. I did.

Q. Do

Q. Do you think Sir D. Baird so considered it from any conversation you had with him on the subject?

A. I do.

The remainder of the evidence of this witness went to prove the several allegations made by Sir Home in his speech relative to the security of the Cape.

Captain William King called by Sir H. Popham.—This witness was examined at great length: the main points of his evidence were, that he considered the Cape perfectly safe; that it was always understood that Buenos Ayres was within the Cape station; and that Sir H. Popham's behaviour was disinterested and exemplary at Buenos Ayres.

Sir Home then presented a list of papers which he wished to have read in his defence, and entered on the minutes. Those which included his correspondence with the admiralty were admitted by the court; but others they were pleased to consider as inadmissible evidence.

Sir Home then addressed the court in the following terms:—"I here close my defence, and I throw myself upon the wisdom and justice of this honourable court. My feelings and my character have suffered severely; but I trust to your judgment, to relieve the one and rescue the other. If I have, in the exercise of my zeal, exceeded the strictest bounds of discretion, I hope it will be evident that I have been actuated solely by a desire to advance the honour, the glory, and the interest of my country. In the prosecution of those great objects, aided by my gallant followers, and fostered by the superintending hand of providence, it has been my good fortune to be put in possession of the two capitals of two quarters of the globe; and I trust it will be found, upon a close examination of my defence, that

"The head and front of my offending
"Hath this extent—no more."

The court was then (about half past ten o'clock) ordered to be cleared, and the members remained in deliberation until three.

Upon the readmission of strangers, the judge advocate read the sentence, which, after the usual preamble, stating the time at which the court-martial commenced, the names of the members, and the charge against the prisoner, &c. concluded in the following terms:—

"The court is of opinion that the charges have been proved against the said Captain Sir Home Popham:—That the withdrawing, without orders so to do, the whole of any naval force from the place where it is directed to be employed, and the employing it in distant operations against the enemy, more especially if the success of such operations should be likely to prevent

prevent its speedy return, may be attended with the most serious inconvenience to the public service; as the success of any plan formed by his majesty's ministers for operations against the enemy, in which such naval force might be included, may, by such removal, be entirely prevented. And the court is further of opinion that the conduct of the said Captain Sir Home Popham, in the withdrawing the whole of the naval force under his command from the Cape of Good Hope, the proceeding with it to the Rio de la Plata was highly censurable, but in consideration of circumstances, doth adjudge him to be only severely reprimanded, and he is accordingly severely reprimanded."

SKETCH *of the* LIFE *of the late* MR. OPIE.

MR. OPIE was born in the year 1761, in a village in Cornwall, and, about the age of eighteen, he came to town, a joint adventurer with his friend Peter Pindar.

His success in copies from gross and vulgar nature, such as his old beggars, rustics, &c. soon attracted the attention of the public, and he became liberally employed. At this period he attempted historical painting, and produced his best works in this line, the death of David Rizzio, and the murder of one of the kings of Scotland. He was soon engaged by Boydell, in some compositions for the Shakespeare Gallery, for which he was well paid, but in which, like many others, he seems rather to have looked to his price than to his reputation. The notice of the royal academy being turned upon him, he soon became an associate, and, in due time, an academician; at which period he began to wean himself from subjects of history, and to fall into the more successful trade of portrait-painting. It is not our intention to follow Mr. Opie through the stages of his professional life. We shall conclude with a criticism upon his merits as an artist, and a slight remark on his character, as it exhibited itself to our notice.

As a painter, Mr. Opie was undoubtedly in the first rank of his profession, and, in losing him, a gap has been made in the art, which will not speedily be filled. The want of an education, founded on principles and elemental knowledge, was supplied by a vigour of native genius, and a judgment, which, without much study, was matured by observation to tolerable correctness. Being self-taught, he escaped all the insipidity and mannerism of a school; and though he did not attain, 'till somewhat advanced in the profession, to a command in drawing, and what may be called the knowledge of academical proprieties, the absence of these qualities was sufficiently compensated by an originality of genius, an unfettered and

peculiar style of thinking, an immense force and substance, both in colouring and penciling, which must ever distinguish him in art.

As a portrait painter (in which light we must chiefly consider him), he was neither a follower, nor imitator of any that went before him, nor has he left any to take those liberties with him, which he disdained to take with others.

Opie, and his style, are equally lost to the world.

He had nothing of the grace, delicacy, and freedom of Vandyke; he had nothing of that power of giving character to every thing; of that amenity, variety, and ideal beauty, which distinguished the compositions of Reynolds.

He had an immense force, a rough exactness, a coarse severity of rendering every object that was before him. He gave a relief to all his figures, at once bold and deep; and provided the character was sufficiently marked and prominent, he would almost frame, as it were, the living object on his canvas; he would give it with that gross vigour, that severe and exact scrupulosity, which might fatigue the industry of a Dutch painter.

His tones of colour were agreeable and appropriate, beyond example. In this quality, as a portrait painter, he was never excelled.

His excellence was chiefly in the heads of old men, in copies of gross and vulgar nature. In the softness and delicacy of youth, and the grace of female beauty, he could never succeed. He had no creative powers; no conception of that ideal in art, which is alone seen and measured by the mental eye. The object which he had to draw was to be placed before him, and its qualities must have been of that marked and decided nature, that the imitation could easily be made. If he had any thing to invent, to superadd, to combine, or polish, he was lost. He would give you what he saw; but his mind could furnish nothing more. Thus all his attempts at history, are mere assemblages of portraits; like the Dutch painter, if he wanted a Jupiter, he would copy the first burgomaster he met in the streets. In a late composition, Mr. Opie has given us a Bellisarius and a boy; and the first beggar he encountered at his door, was perhaps the model of the Roman general.

If Opie can, with justice, be compared with any other painter, ancient or modern, we should say he was the English Caravagio. Immense strength, original unborrowed manner, coarse exactness in delineating the object present to his eye; bold relief; a substance of colouring and penciling; a disdain of any thing artificial or ideal; an appropriate tone of colour, agreeably distributed and fitted to its objects, distinguished both masters. Such is the opinion which candour extorts

torts from us, relative to the merits of the deceased artist: we have meant only to be just. In private life Opie was plain and simple. His appearance was against him. His understanding was good, but not much cultivated; there was an invincible vulgarity about him which nothing could polish out. He died April 9, 1807, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and has left a widow, but no children.

Distressed Situation of the Crew of the Spanish Ship Asia, commanded by Don Joseph Pizarro.

THE dreadful calamity occasioned by a total failure of provisions to a number of men, at a considerable distance from any inhabited island, may be better conceived than described. Among the various perils and disasters incident to a nautical life, none appears so truly distressing as the prospect of starvation, which the following anecdote will exemplify:

During Lord Anson's voyage round the world, the Spaniards fitted out a squadron of ships, to traverse the views and enterprizes of the English vessels, one of which, the admiral's ship, named the Asia, of 66 guns, when off Cape Horn, was reduced to such infinite distress, that after every kind of sustenance failed, the sailors gave four dollars a piece for every rat that could be caught; and some little time previous to this, a sailor, who died on board, had his death concealed by his brother, who, during that time, lay in the same hammock with the corpse, only to receive the dead man's allowance of provisions.

In this shocking situation, they were alarmed (if their horrors were capable of augmentation) by the discovery of a conspiracy among the marines, which was to massacre the officers and the crew of the ship, that they might satisfy their hunger by eating their bodies. But their designs were discovered, when just upon the point of execution, by means of one of the conspirators, and three of the ringleaders were put to death. At length, though the conspiracy was suppressed, yet, by the complicated misfortunes of sickness, fatigue, and hunger, which could not be alleviated until too late, the greatest part of the ship's company died a lingering and painful death; so that, when the ship arrived at the River de la Plata, out of nearly seven hundred men, only about fifty were remaining alive, and scarcely able to crawl for want of nourishment.

An ANECDOTE.

A Poor lord of a manor, in the north of England, who had rather an extensive rabbit warren on his estate, was particularly partial to the company of the curate of the parish, and frequently invited him to dine at his house; and though the table was but scantily furnished with fish, fowl, or butcher's meat, it was most amply supplied with rabbits, dressed in various ways. The curate, who was not overburthened with riches, and who found it convenient, occasionally, to accept the lord of the manor's invitation, grew, in the course of time, rather cloyed of his usual fare. Being one day asked by his host to return thanks on the removal of the cloth, he rose, and complied in the following terms:—

For rabbits hot, for rabbits cold,
For rabbits young, for rabbits old:
For rabbits tender, rabbits tough,
We thank the lord, we've had enough.

REMARKABLE COFFIN.

SIR ROBERT COTTON told Weever of a chest of lead, found in Radcliffe-field, in Stepney parish; the upper part garnished with scalloped shells and a crotister border. At the head and foot of the coffin stood two jars, three feet long; and on the sides a number of bottles of glistering red earth, some painted, and many great phials of glass, some six, some eight square, having a whitish liquor in them.

Within the chest was the body of a woman, as the surgeons judged by the scull. On either side of her were two sceptres of ivory, eighteen inches long, and on her breast a little figure of Cupid, neatly cut in white stone. And among the bones were two pieces of jet, with round heads, in form of nails, three inches long.

This account is taken from Gough, Sep. vol. i. p. 64. Weever Fun. Mon. p. 50.

A QUESTION, *by J. Whitnell, of Street.*

REQUIRED the weight of a block of marble, avoirdupoise, 2 feet thick, 4½ feet wide, and 27 feet long, whose specific gravity is 2700; and also what weight must be applied to a lever 12 feet long, to balance it, supposing the lever to be laid across a prop 6 inches from the point of suspension.

POETRY.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

LIBERTY.

Lines respectfully addressed to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the Abolition of the Slave-Trade.

ACCEPT, great Sir! the lowly theme I sing,
The unfledg'd offspring of my pen I bring:
Sincere its accents—say, wilt thou refuse
The humble offering of my trembling muse?
'Tis true—no triumphs blaze throughout my verse,
Nor doth my song great Nelson's deeds rehearse;
No conqu'ring navies ride amid my lines,
No Sidney's act in brightest lustre shines;
No dying Pitt, whose last and falt'ring breath,
Exclaim'd, "My country!" in the arms of death.
What tho' I can't to themes like these aspire,
To grace my song, and bid mankind admire?
Yet will I boast, I'll boast a grateful name,
The first and fairest on the lists of fame:
Fair liberty! to thee request I make,
Of thy soft spirit let me now partake.
Infuse one spark of thy celestial fire,
To warm my breast, and all my soul inspire;
I feel the sacred flame surround my heart,
Fan it ye winds! and all its joys impart
To Afric's groaning shore; there proudly boast,
Ye waft the tidings from Britannia's coast;
Blow soft, ye gales! ye waves in concert move,
Your freight is glorious liberty and love.
Freedom! of Heaven the fairest, purest guest,
"Serenely lovely, and supremely blest;"
Enrob'd in white, and ting'd with purest gold,
Freedom loose floating from thy ev'ry fold.

Thus, as ye glide amid the aerial way,
Or sail serenely o'er the swelling sea,
In melting strains, methinks, I hear thee say,
Afric be free, and dry up all thy tears,
Disperse thy doubts, and mitigate thy fears;
'Tis Britain's wish—'tis Wilberforce commands;
Give ear, O earth! and listen all ye lands—
Afric is free—'tis Albion breaks the chain,
And causes liberty alone to reign:
She, ever gen'rous, ever truly brave,
Recoils, astonish'd, at the name of slave;
Brave freedom's sun to shine o'er all the space,
That wide encompasses the human race.

Is God displeas'd? Does he behold this deed?
His wrath subsides, and all his frowns recede.
England remain. The mercy thou hast giv'n,
Angels shall chaunt amid the themes of Heav'n.
England! my country! thee I claim with pride,
Warms glows my heart because to thee allied;

All

All that is great and good in thee I see,
The friend of truth, of peace, and liberty.
Long may'st thou live, possess'd of all that charms
The ravish'd soul, unmix'd with what alarms;
E'er may the poet, in immortal verse,
Enraptur'd hail thee, and thy deeds rehearse;
'Till time to chaos has all nature hurl'd,
Exist, and be the glory of the world.

What shall we say, or how applaud the man,
Who builds his faith upon so great a plan?
Can words perform the task, can language say,
How pure his soul, or all its worth display?
Ten thousand tears of heart-felt, holy joy,
Embalm his deeds, which time shall ne'er destroy;
Applauding nations shall confirm his fame,
And millions hail, in grateful shouts, his name;
Angels shall waft before th'e ethereal throne
Thy sacred form; and seraphims shall own,
Shall own, delighted, in the courts above,
Thy deeds, replete with mercy, truth, and love.

Afric repose—the godlike deed is done;
Ye all are free—as is your blazing sun.
Enjoy your vales, enjoy your native fields;
Enjoy that bliss which freedom ever yields:
Let no vain doubts again your breasts invade,
Nor gloomy sorrows o'er your minds pervade;
Let not the pensive eye on earth be cast,
Look up with joy, and hail your glorious guest.
Freedom is your's—by Wilberforce 'tis given,
Confirm'd, applauded, by the smiles of Heav'n.

Afric repose—no more the weeping maid
Shall seek the shelter of the lonely shade;
No more her tears for banish'd love shall flow,
But ever present shall for ever glow
With mutual bliss—made only bliss by thee
Offspring of Heaven, auspicious liberty!
No more the sire his rising hope shall mourn,
Snatch'd from his bosom, never to return;
No more the mother pierce the trembling air,
Or to the winds her woe-fraught bosom bare;
But all, delighted, hail the happy hour,
That burst the fetters of oppression's pow'r.

To thee, my Wilberforce, I gladly turn,
I pause and tremble—now enraptur'd burn
To give that praise from wond'ring millions due,
I pause once more—the theme again pursue.
E'er may that godlike spirit thou hast fir'd
Exist, and make thee more and more admir'd;
'Till to the climax of perfection ris'n,
Thou find'st that liberty thou lov'st in Heav'n.

Camborne. J. B.

A SATIRIST.

DRONE pens a picture of the age,
Blackens his friends, in ev'ry page
Some treacherous anecdote repeating:
Arraign'd he first the fact denies,
If push'd adds perjury to lies;
And damns his soul—to save a beating!

For

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

EPIGRAM *on* TAILOR HEWLET, *of* SHERBORNE.

'TIS an adage fallacious, deny it who can,
That "a tailor is but the ninth part of a man."
Old John, who scarce *measures* an *ell* and half high,
Stands forth to evince that the proverb's a lie;
Nay he vows he's prepar'd, spite of malice, to shew
That a man of the *sheers* might be reckon'd as *two*.
Full seventy winters o'er Johnny have flown,
A being *patch'd* up of skin, muscle, and bone.
He has married two wives, and, to silence each railer,
Both ladies bring honestly *twins* to the tailor.

CELIA.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

DAY-BREAK.

HOW sweetly Aurora dawns over this isle,
When she leads on her vernal career!
Lo! she peeps thro' her veil, and discovers a smile,
As she shakes the dew off from her hair.

She opens the day, and rejoices to find,
The shadows of night are withdrawn:
Her features declare her both cheerful and kind,
As she comes in the pride of the morn.

Dock, Devon.

ODE *to* MUSIC.

By the late Dr. WARTON.

QUEEN of every moving measure,
Sweetest source of purest pleasure,
Music; why thy powers employ
Only for the sons of joy?
Only for the smiling guests,
At natal or at nuptial feasts;
Rather thy lenient numbers pour
On those whom secret griefs devour;
Bid be still the throbbing hearts
Of those whom death or absence parts,
And, with some softly whisper'd air,
Oh! smooth the brow of dumb despair.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

EPIGRAM [FROM THE FRENCH].

ENCHANTING Colin! thou didst charm my sight,
When at the first I saw thy image gay;
And in thy love was conscious of delight,
For lo! I thought thee brighter than the day.
Enchanting Colin! thou didst charm my sight,
But then I saw thee in *another* light.

Trent. B. AYRES.